

US Elections Rigged

The computer program used to count over one-third of votes cast in the last US Presidential election is vulnerable to manipulation and fraud.

According to expert court witnesses in actions challenging local and congressional elections in three US states, nation-wide votes counted by the system may have been secretly altered.

The vote-counting program, challenged in Indiana, West Virginia and Maryland, was developed by *Computer Election Systems*, which has been accused of helping to rig elections - including the election of Ronald Reagan.

The rapidly increasing use of such systems and the widespread lack of computer skills among most local voting authorities constitutes a new and serious risk.

"There is a massive potential for problems," said Mr Gary Greenhalgh, director of the Washington-based International Centre on Election Law and Administration.

John Kemp, president of *Computer Election Systems*, denied the company was involved in fraudulent schemes, but also said any computer system could be tampered with.

"It is totally economically infeasible to have a fraud-proof system," he said, quoting the projected price of such a system at over \$US1 billion.

In three of the legal challenges against the company, losing candidates hired computer consultants who stated in court affidavits, testimony and interviews that the company's program had been designed so that vote totals could be altered without leaving any sign of tampering.

The allegations, if true, would render the last US Presidential elections invalid and unconstitutional - but they have received little attention since first being made in July, 1985.

Life, Death and Plastic Comets

Halley's Comet is partly made of plastic, according to analysis of data obtained during its last visit.

"It may be there are very few things man can make that don't already exist," said Mr Walter Huebner, who identified the polymerised formaldehyde polyoxymethylene. The Halley's plastic probably predates the sun and planets, and plastic compounds may also exist in other interstellar objects.

On leave from the US Los Alamos National Laboratory, Mr Huebner said the plastic was found deep within the comet's head, using spectroscopic analysis. The compound is among the easiest plastics to manufacture and was first produced on Earth around the turn of the century. Made from hydrogen, carbon and oxygen, it was probably formed in the comet by exposure to cosmic radiation or ultraviolet light.



Cosmic Sperm

Evidence also seems to confirm the theory that comets carry seeds of life through space. The discovery of organic matter - complex hydrogen-carbon molecules - in Comet Wilson by Australian scientists this year indicate that the chemical building-blocks of life may be transported by comets.

Similar chemicals were found in Halley's Comet in 1986 by Dr David Allen of the Anglo-Australian Observatory and Dr Dayal Wickramasinghe of the Australian National University.

They used a telescope-mounted infrared detector at Siding Spring Mountain Observatory near Coonabarabran to make both discoveries. They are investigating theories by British astronomer Fred Hoyle and Dr Chandra Wickramasinghe (Dayal's brother) that viruses and bacteria can exist in space and are brought to Earth by these 'cosmic spermatazoa'.

"Five years ago I wouldn't have believed a word of it," said Dr Wickramasinghe. "Now, I think it's quite possible."

"I don't think the implications - for biology, for the spread of diseases and the origin of life - have been investigated properly, because no-one outside a small group of people is thinking about them."

Unlike the regular visits of Halley's comet (which may have been contaminated by repeated passages through our solar system), Comet Wilson's flyby is thought to be its first and only trip into the inner solar system.

Life and Death?

The theory that a huge comet or asteroid caused the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago has gained support. A team of US Government geologists have found matching pieces of shattered quartz in sites across the world - from Europe to the middle of the Pacific.

The quartz is believed to have been hurled around the globe (along with a world wide dust "blanket") when a large object smashed through the Earth's crust. According to one British scientific team, this resulted in the formation of Greenland (which rose from the sea at roughly the same time) due to a massive upwelling from the mid-Atlantic ridge.

The dust blanket is thought to have starved off many species which survived the effect of impact - catastrophic earthquakes and 'mile-high tidal waves' encircling the globe.

Other evidence includes a layer of red clay deposited around the world 65 million years ago, coincident with mass extinction - its highest concentrations are centred around the North Atlantic.

Boomerang Volcanoes Return

Ancient Australian volcanoes have slowly marched down the East coast, forming chains in the shape of boomerangs pointing west.

Many of the eastern volcanic fields are young and dormant and an eruption could happen "at any time," but a new theory about the regular 'return' of the boomerang formations may help predict when and where our next volcano will erupt.

After twenty years of study and field work, Australian Museum geologist Dr Lin Sutherland recently noticed the regular boomerang shapes and that the boomerangs kept returning further south over time.

"Although it may not seem so, eastern Australia is one of the great volcanic belts of the world," Dr Sutherland said.

Aborigines Witnessed Eruptions

"Some are so fresh they look like they erupted just yesterday - and we cannot say they are extinct. Aborigines certainly witnessed eruptions and the last one, at Mount Gambier in South Australia, probably happened only about 4,000 years ago."

Eastern Australia's volcanoes have erupted regularly over the past 90 million years. The biggest and oldest are in north Queensland and they become younger and smaller as they progress south. According to the theory, the Australian continent has drifted north over a stationary 'hot spot' deep below the Earth's crust.

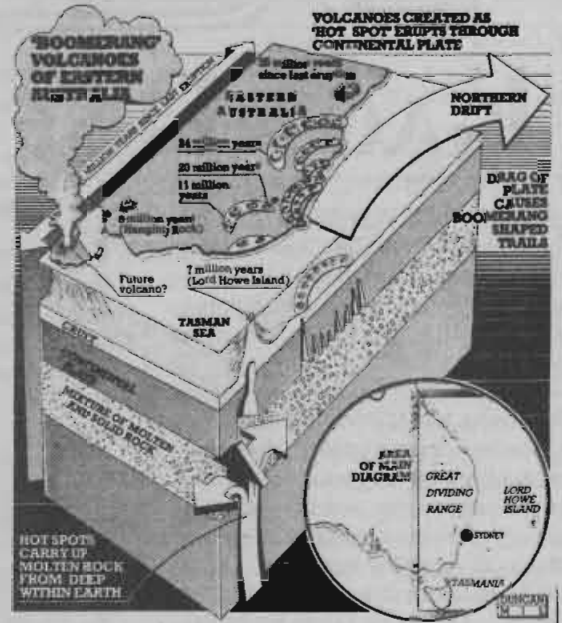
Regular eruptions from the hot spot may have formed the boomerang trail as the continent snaked across it in a 'dog-leg' fashion. The most recent southern volcanoes are the smallest, suggesting the hot spot is cooling down.

Northern Drift

The Australian continent is being pushed north at the rate of six centimetres a year as the oceans grow wider, according to Dr Laurie Drake, senior lecturer in Earth Sciences at Sydney's Macquarie University.

The continental plates also shift up to ten centimetres each year around the June solstice, causing minor tremors, says Dr Drake. This is due to the fact that the earth 'winds up' and slows down an-

clue to next volcanic eruption



nally in its elliptical orbit.

Tasmania Next?

Dr Sutherland, a senior Museum researcher in earth sciences, believes a mighty rift opened up like a zipper beneath the floor of the Coral and Tasman Seas 90 to 65 million years ago.

The rift in the crust now lies somewhere beneath Bass Strait, so Tasmania is the most likely candidate for our next

major volcano. Deep gas discharges have also been detected in Tasmanian mines and some of the crust in the region is much hotter than surrounding areas, but the time of another eruption is anyone's guess.

"It could be tomorrow or it could be 5,000 years away, but I'd say the chances of it happening again soon are pretty high," said Dr Sutherland.

Asteroid On Course for Earth

A giant asteroid seems on a collision course with Earth, according to Soviet scientist Alexander Voytsekhovskiy.

British astronomers have calculated that the asteroid, discovered four years ago and known as "1983 TV", will collide with the Earth in the year 2115, says Voytsekhovskiy.

"If studies confirm that the two celestial bodies will collide, then our successors will have two choices in order to save themselves - either to make the asteroid alter its course, or to blow it up in space," he wrote in the newspaper *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya*.

"Given the present level of scientific and technological progress, the second option is more realistic.

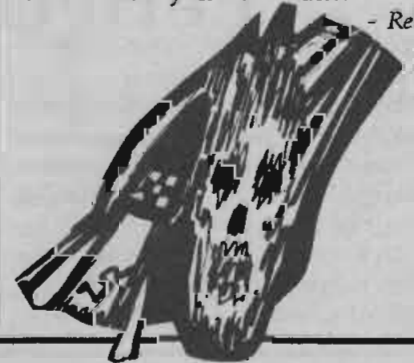
"But the complexity of the problem is obvious even to laymen."

Vast sums of money would be needed to precisely locate the asteroid and send a space interceptor to destroy it.

"It will be possible to solve this problem only in one way - by setting up an *All-World Space Service* for the defence of Earth," he said.

Mentioning lost civilizations, he said Atlantis may be only a hypothesis, "but huge craters on the Earth's surface caused by large meteoroids are a reality". He said only a great catastrophe could explain why such diverse civilizations as the Egyptians, Assyrians and the Mayans began their calendars at almost exactly the same time.

- Reuter



KAOS HACKS INTO SPACE

Young West German computer hackers who call themselves the *Chaos (Kaos) Computer Club* have broken into a top-secret computer network which interconnects NASA with the Western world's space agencies.

Denying accusations of espionage, the youths have told West German Interior Minister 'interrogators' that they planted a type of program known as a *Trojan horse* in the world-wide network of scientific research centres, known as SPAN, "for fun".

Intelligence services of the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Switzerland have suppressed news of the attack for months. Some of the projects the *Kaos Computer Club* - who also call themselves *Data Travellers* - gained access to include British remote-sensing spy satellite programs, NASA space platform technology, French manned satellite plans and Japanese space computer communications technology.

"I had a slight shock when I saw appear on my screen: 'Welcome to the NASA headquarters VAX installation,'" Club spokesman Mr Wau Holland told *Stern* magazine.

The 'Trojan horses' downloaded by the hackers waited for a top-security user to log on with a secret password, recorded their computer keystrokes in a hidden file and revealed everything typed on the keyboard. Working over six months, the young West Germans implanted Trojans in highly classified systems which gave them 'authorised' access to alter accounts and security checks, thereby covering their tracks.

Worldwide Access

They accessed at least 135 computer centres in nine countries over six months, planting Trojan horses and a new keyword within the system. With these installed they entered any computer in the SPAN network they wished.

Some of the group, thought to have access to highly-classified operating manuals for *Digital Equipment* computers, have still not been caught.

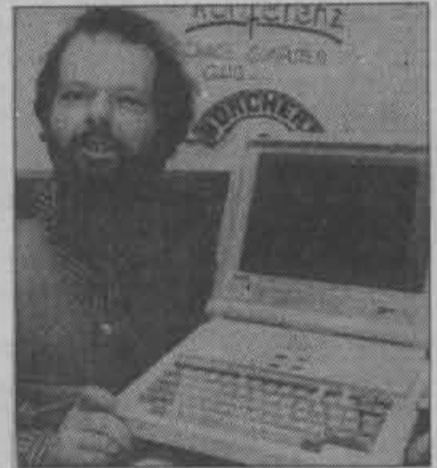
Trojan Worms?

A 'Trojan horse' program is infamous in computer circles as a downloaded program which looks like ordinary software, but which can wipe the programs of anyone who loads it into their system.

Trojan horses began appearing several years ago and have reached a high level of sophistication. Among the dozens of Trojans in circulation, some begin their destruction within minutes. Some known as "bombs" perform as legitimate software for weeks or months, then touch off an electronic time-bomb. Others, known as "viruses" or "worms", actually replicate and move from system to system, leaving seeds of destruction in their wake.

Star-Spangled Spanner

"There was a graphics program called *Run me* that I thought would be neat to run once," says Charles Rawls, a Manhattan computer user. "It played the 'Star-Spangled Banner' and displayed the American flag. Meanwhile, it was



worming its way into my hard disc and erased the data in it."

The hackers were prompted by NASA claims that their computers were absolutely secure and hacker-proof. NASA still have not recognised the data tampering, and claim their system is secure (and, presumably, has had no bombs, worms or viruses carried in by Trojan horse).

The Hamburg *Kaos Computer Club* announced the break-in on television, claiming to have discovered the Trojans while working within the SPAN network. They state they're out to prove there are holes in the security systems of the most well-protected computer systems.

Mr Holland further claims that the reason the hackers went public was that *most research at NASA is aimed at developing new weapons systems.*

Perfect Match

Colonel Gaddafi has married Nabila Koshoggi, the 25-year-old daughter of the Saudi Arabian oil magnate Adnan Koshoggi, according to Italy's largest circulation newspaper.

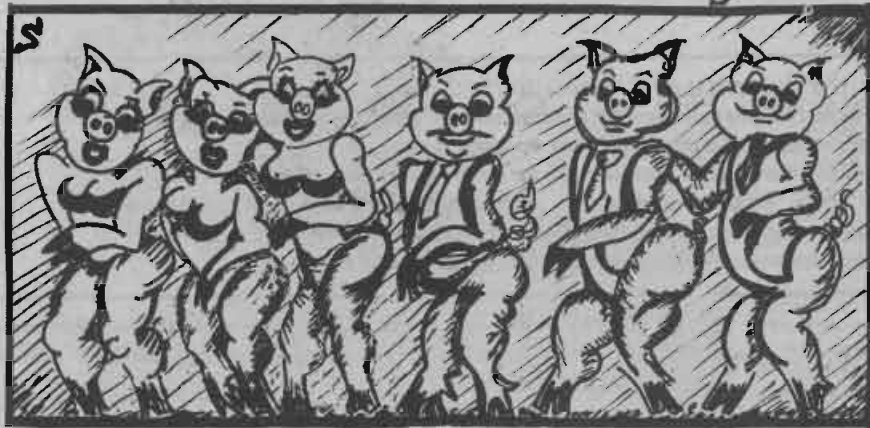
Mr Koshoggi, regarded as one of the richest men in the world, is reportedly in financial difficulty. He was a middle-

man in the U.S. ('Contragate') arms sales to Iran, and allegedly involved in the smuggling of Ferdinand Marcos' fortune out of the Philippines.

Colonel Gaddafi has signed a contract to sell Libyan crude oil to Mr Koshoggi at prices below those set by the OPEC, said Milan's *Corriere Della Sera.*



Plastic Money



Australian money - the alternative to plastic cards - is to be made of plastic. A new CSIRO invention is to change the face of our currency, starting with a Bicentennial commemorative banknote reportedly portraying Captain Cook.

The new money is made of a number of images set within laminated layers of plastic polymer, which can change colour when seen from different angles and even when touched. 'Impossible' to tear or reproduce photographically, the new notes are the culmination of a 20-year secret joint project between the CSIRO and the Reserve Bank, developed to make forgery impossible.

"It will save Australia millions of dollars because the notes will last much longer," said CSIRO chairman Neville Wran.

"But as soon as we start using them the rest of the world will want to follow suit and so there is the prospect for great earnings from the sale of patent and licensing rights." Australia may also produce the notes for less technologically advanced nations.

"I've held one in my hand and you can't pick them from a conventional note," said Mr Wran.

The Reserve Bank's annual report states that the \$2 note will be replaced by a coin in 1988 and that forty million old one dollar notes, withdrawn from circulation in 1984, are still missing - no doubt hidden under mattresses during the Fraser years.

Is the CSIRO moving away from pure research and getting down to making money after all?

ALLERGIC TO LIFE

Five Melbourne firemen have developed severe allergies to everyday items after being exposed to a gas released by burning building materials.

Toluene Di-Isocyanates (TDI) is used in paints, plastics and polyurethanes and turns to acid when it comes into contact with moisture.

One of the firemen, Mr Graeme Hartney, was exposed to TDI when his breathing apparatus was knocked from his face while fighting a chemical fire in South Melbourne in 1982. The gas burned his nose and respiratory tract, leaving him unable to filter air.

It also badly damaged his immune system and left him highly sensitised to newsprint, car exhaust, tap water and food kept in plastic containers or wraps. The smell of perfume or deodorant can

send him into a rage, give him headaches or force him to spend days in bed.

There are 20 more suspected cases in Victoria.

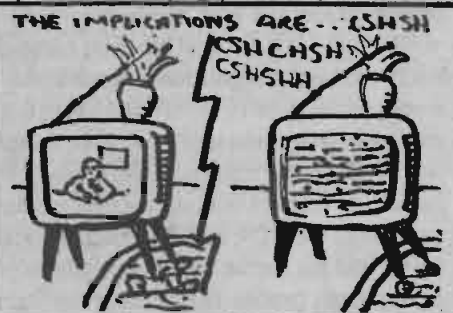


Chip Gun

A new "Chip Gun" has been developed which sends out a radio frequency signal to destroy computer chips.

"A pulse could be propagated over a wide zone, in roughly the same way that radio signals can blanket a city. It might act as an electronic wall disabling any approaching airplane, tank, or missile", according to defence specialist Chuck de Caro in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine.

Soviet superiority in radio defence applications has Western scientists and engineers worried [See NEXUS issue 2 for recent 'zap gap' developments].



Earl Resurrects King

James Earl Ray, jailed for life in the US for the murder of civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King on April 4th, 1968, wants a retrial.

"I had a show trial, and that's about it," he said in an interview on British BBC TV. Ray claims his lawyer gave him no option but to plead guilty after he was captured in London on June 6th.

"I was just unfortunate to be in the wrong place at the wrong time," he said. In a series of magazine articles written in the US by William Bradford Huie, Ray claimed that he had been the unwitting pawn in a conspiracy to kill Nobel laureate Dr King.

At the close of his one-day trial on March 10th, 1969, both prosecution and defence attorneys went to great pains to explain to the jury that there was no conspiracy. Ray began to disagree but was interrupted by his defence counsel.

Under Tennessee law, pleading guilty to murder automatically reduced Ray's death sentence to 99 years.

In the same BBC program, King's son Martin said he believed more than one person was involved in his father's killing and that he did not rule out the involvement of the FBI.

'Information is the currency of Democracy' - Ralph Nader

The major political parties are guaranteed free and equal media time by Australian news and broadcasting regulations. Others struggle on shoestring budgets to get their messages across.

Nexus is an independant publication which can provide room for a full spectrum of views.

In this issue we have two interviews with 'Green' activists: the first with controversial Green Party Senate candidate and anti-nuclear activist Ian Cohen, who has surfed on the bow of one US nuclear-armed warship and climbed onto the deck of another in Sydney harbour - two recent actions in the long career of this environmental campaigner.

How was your first Federal election?

Well, on a personal level it was quite a strain. I've usually worked as part of a group; whether out 'surfing warships' or doing a little flash individually, I'm generally springing from a very strong support group like the Peace Squadron or other groups concerned with rainforest issues.

With the last Federal election campaign the head left the tail in terms of our political organisation. We had people who were keen to work in the office and get things organised - there was a massive amount of work to be done in that area - but that was more or less separated from what I had to do as the front runner: to just get out and make a media splash.

Unlike the NDP with Peter Garrett at the previous election - who had his media machine ready to go, and who also had a very high profile before he even started - I felt I had to impress myself on the national arena almost on my own. I had a friend, Richard Gosden, who was invaluable, a very creative guy. We kept concocting confrontations with politicians like Hawke and Cohen - at the Bondi Pavilion to launch an Arts Heritage book where we started talking long and loud about the pollution at Bondi - through to Hawke's campaign launch and, of course, Howard's launch.

'It's pathetic that people in the alternative scene don't pull their finger out and do a big, brave act and REGISTER TO VOTE, because it's so important'

It was a formula that we stumbled upon by being there and heckling and seeing how the media would react. We realised that we could inject a type of radical direct action into the political process.

It certainly worked. I've just been checking the election breakdown and we certainly had our strong points in northern NSW and particularly the inner city electorates. But there was a trickle from right around the State and it would seem to me that that trickle came from the broadcasting that was achieved in the media by my antics.

On a personal level it was extremely intense. I walked around for about three weeks feeling that my head was twice the size it normally is and had headaches. I was trying to push myself, most notably at the Howard launch where I found myself in a roomful of thousands of staunch Liberal supporters. When I put a banner up and started heckling and was dragged off by security men, there was a very intense hatred directed at me in that room, by people who believe they were born to rule - you could feel it - you could cut the air with a knife. Every one of those events took a lot out of me.

In the past you've had to get arrested to make the news. Did you find it was easier to get attention as a Senate candidate?

Well, I was arrested at Hawke's campaign launch when he was on his barge. I was charged with obstruction and causing a nuisance to a vessel in restricted waters in the Harbour, I think it was. I have \$200 worth of fines plus a 12 month good behaviour bond for that and I'm appealing against the severity of it.

Arrests come as an often unexpected endgame to the chess that's going on. But I've found in the past and find still, that except in a few specific situations - like diving off the rocks into the pollution at Bondi and paddling through it, where that's enough of a highlight for the media to come and cover the issue without an arrest dangling like a carrot in front of their noses - in most cases, the situations I've developed have had to go to a point near arrest to create sufficient highlight for the media to be titillated and run it.

Everything that I did - for example, spending the night inside the end of the monorail tube - was an act that could, if the police had decided, have had me taken away and arrested. While they didn't bother (and I was glad that they didn't) it was still a position in which I was relatively vulnerable. I had to keep doing those things and take the risk of being arrested. That's why a good behaviour bond is really an infringement of my right to act politically, because I can't imagine myself running a successful campaign without being a little bit badly behaved.

Do you think we've reached a point where no real issues are raised in elections unless they're raised by people like yourself?

Definitely. It's a scam by the politicians, it's a glossy media event, it's the ultimate in hypocrisy by people who are running the country. The Labor Party's taken over the reins of power from the Liberals (who thought that they were destined to rule forever) - it's co-opted like some sort of bloodless coup. We saw a little machination with Fraser taking over from Whitlam a few years ago and now we have a situation where Labour have firmly grabbed the reins again. They're achieving their political ends through a process of subtle propaganda and they're avoiding the real issues.

One of our main themes in this run with the Greens was that we stick to the vital issues, whether it be a nuclear-armed warship or any other environmental issue that needs to be spoken about, and in fact it's easy pickings. I stood at many a public meeting with Democrat, Labor and Liberal party members speaking and I found that it was so damned easy because they were so hypocritical and were constantly lying. Everybody knows that politicians lie, and here we have a situation where you just stand up and say the truth.

It's so easy.

Waves

What reactions have you been getting from politicians for 'saying the truth'?

I've been getting very favourable reactions from a number of Democrat politicians and a number of left-wing Labor people. I've been getting vehement reactions from, for example, the Member for Richmond, Charles Blunt, with whom I clashed when he spoke at a housing and welfare forum at Rockdale alongside (Social Security) Minister Howe and Democrats. They wouldn't allow me on the platform as a Green candidate but I managed to get a question up from the floor. Blunt launched a vehement attack on someone who was holding up signs from the Unemployed Peoples' Union, going on a rabid, dolebashing blast...

He's in an electorate that's got a high percentage of unemployed alternative people and I'd like you to say in *NEXUS* magazine that it's pathetic that people in the alternative scene don't pull their finger out and do a big, brave act and REGISTER TO VOTE, because it's so important.

If I had 5,000 people in this state who are Green, who live in the forest and love the forests, live out of the city, who live in communities, who just had the bloody guts to vote, then I would be in Canberra right now. It's no big deal, because Robert Wood of the NDP is actually in there with Green preferences, and that's fantastic. But I was interested to see that in many of the 'alternative' areas, Richmond included, my vote wasn't as high as in the inner suburban seats of Sydney.

Do you put that down to a lack of people registering?

Yes, I'd say so. Lack of registration and resistance by alternative people who have been fed many years of propaganda to 'hide away, it doesn't have anything to do with you'...

..And disbelieve what any 'politician' tells them?

Exactly, and 'Don't vote, it only encourages them'. Well, if you don't vote that *does* encourage them. If you don't vote, they're able to survive.

Charles Blunt of the National Party is attacking the Social Service sector of this society and is surviving in this area by a mere six to eight thousand votes. Now if the 'alternative' people in this particular electorate were to register, then he would be out in the next election.

I'm now running for the local council elections under Fast Bucks on the Radical Ratbags ticket which, hopefully, will see Bucksie get into power in the Byron Shire Council and really start kicking heads in there.

We hope to get five, perhaps six Green Councillors in, including the President, and then we're dealing with a Green council - the implications could go far and wide through this society.



'If you don't vote that *does* encourage them. If you don't vote, they're able to survive.'

Is the path of the Greens to work from the grass roots up?

Definitely. The Federal Election was, in some ways, only a 'whistle blast' that started the race. In typical form, I went to bite off more than I could chew. But the real importance of the electoral process is in local councils and I just hope that my run in the Federal election signalled that 'these things are possible, you can get elected'. Next year there will be Green candidates in the State election.

I polled 32,000 votes in this last election and the Greens cover State elections perhaps even better than the NDP. Perhaps we could go into some sort of coalition, which I don't see as being a bad thing at all. If that's the case, with the sort of votes we got we should be able to get at least one person elected to the State Upper House. Each step along the way you're going to get more people who are going to vote for Greens, or NDP, or who have 'radical' voting patterns registered.

So if we've a series of maybe three or four processes where this is repeated - it has to be repeated because people are pretty thick and slow to act on this - then we'll get to a point where, by the time the next Federal election comes along, we *will* have extra people registered, we *will* be better known and people *will* be able to vote alternative candidates in. ∞

On first count in Byron Shire, Fast Bucks lost the election by two votes! -R.A..

Remote Area Power Assistance Scheme

The New South Wales Government has set up a Remote Area Power Assistance Scheme to help permanent residents of remote areas get an adequate domestic power supply.

Starting from the 1st January 1987, RAPAS is a five year scheme co-ordinated by the Energy Authority of NSW.

Grid Connection:

You may be eligible for a grant of 40% of a connection costs in excess of \$10,000. The maximum grant is \$10,000 for an outlay of \$35,000 or more.

Self Sufficiency:

For self-sufficient 'Stand Alone' systems - where the quoted cost of grid connection is over \$20,000 - you may be eligible for:

An annual subsidy of half the cost of operating and maintaining your system, with an upper limit of \$250 per year per property.

A grant of 40% of the cost of purchasing or upgrading a system. The maximum grant is \$10,000 for a system costing \$25,000.

Assistance may be provided for; diesel or petrol generating sets, batteries, inverters, photovoltaic cells, micro-hydro systems, wind generators, solar hot water systems, battery chargers and system wiring and installation costs - up to 33% of system hardware costs.

ANNUAL SUBSIDY

Anyone purchasing or currently operating a stand alone power system may be eligible for an annual subsidy of 50%



of fuel and maintenance costs, up to a maximum of \$250 - paid retrospectively.

RAPAS assistance is designed for domestic systems only.

For full details see the Remote Area Power Assistance Scheme Guidelines, available from the Energy Authority of New South Wales, GPO Box 485, Sydney 2001, Phone 02-234-4444; or electricity supply authorities.

Only a Game...

September 7th, 1988 has been named "Day of Destruction of War Toys in All Countries of the World".

In a symbolic gesture in Geneva, the Dalai Lama (spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists) smashed two plastic tanks with a hammer to announce the day. The World Association for Orphans and Abandoned Children named the date to draw attention to this overt programming of children to regard warfare as a normal human endeavour.

"Although I am a monk, a man of peace, when I was young I was very fond of these war toys. Unconsciously, without knowing it, it made some kind of impact on my mind," said the Dalai Lama, who called his gesture "mini-disarmament".

The only child at the ceremony, a five year old boy named Siddarta, walked away with an undamaged Sherman tank saying: "I like military games."

Toy Swords to Ploughs

A worldwide Christian movement for peace and disarmament has formed a group called the National Coalition Against War Toys to initiate the immobilisation and dismantling of war toys in Australia.

Anyone concerned about the sale and promotion of war and violence-related toys and entertainment should contact:

Pax Christi Australia P.O. Box 31,
Carlton South, Victoria 3053
Phone (03) 459-2697

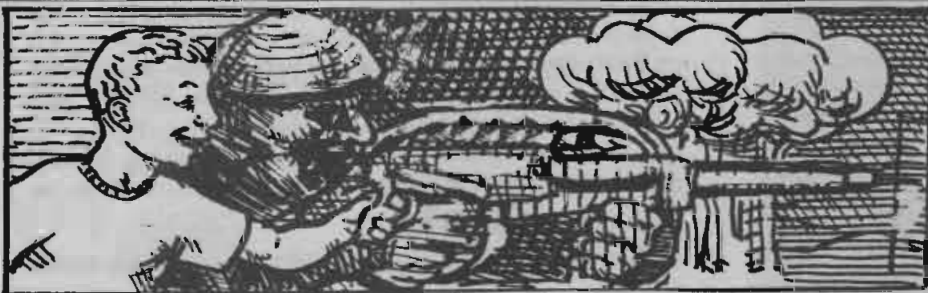


Waterfall Rock Carvings

Aboriginal rock carvings beside the Princes Highway at Waterfall were recently photographed by a radio-controlled camera suspended from a helium balloon.

In a Bicentenary project by archaeologist Les Bursill (of Sutherland council) and scientists from Lucas Heights, the balloon took photos from 90 metres above the carvings.

The Menai-Bundeena area was once inhabited by the Darwhaal tribe, who carved the now-fading images of fish, whales and other creatures into the sandstone hundreds or even thousands of years ago. The carvings also depict 'dragon' and 'cow'-like animals.



Last Nomads Battle for Rainforests

Native tribespeople have been holding loggers at bay with blowpipes and spears in Malaysia.

The Penan people of Sarawak in Malaysian Borneo are the last nomadic hunters in South-East Asia. A few hundred of the 8,000-strong tribe have been defending their rainforests from Malaysian Government-backed logging companies for the last year. In September, at the start of World Rainforest Week, they destroyed the logging companies' bridges into the 'park' that is their home.

As part of a worldwide campaign in support of the Penan people, members of the NSW Wilderness Society delivered a petition of 2,000 signatures to the Malaysian Trade Commission in Sydney in September.

"The Malaysian Peninsula has been almost logged out of rainforest timbers," campaign director Matthew Jamieson said.

"The Government has now turned to logging in Sarawak and Sabah, in Malaysian Borneo.

"The Penan tribe, which derives its food of fruit, roots, and wildlife from the forests, is now under threat as logging companies approach their forests.

"(They) have held the loggers off with primitive weapons, mainly because world pressure has stopped reprisals. But now it remains to be seen how long they can last against Government and logging company pressures."

Australian Deported

In March this year, Sydney botanist and journalist Petr Faigl was deported to Australia from Sarawak. He had arrived



in January to interview Bruno Manser, a Swiss artist, cheesemaker and spelunker living in Sarawak for nearly three years as a guest of the Penan.

Manser says "they are poor people if you look at their possessions, but if you look at their minds they are rich people." He is studying the Penan culture and is compiling a dictionary of their language as he continues to live with them despite threats, police harassment and malaria.

European and Australian travellers have been entering the jungles between Ulu Sungei Tutoh and Ulu Sungei Limbang since Manser began raising world awareness of the plight of the Penan.

"The Penan people are an aboriginal group with a distinct language and culture, inhabiting the north-eastern part of Sarawak," says Faigl.

"Originally nomadic, some have already settled or are in the process of settling, chiefly as a result of government incentives and the pressure of massive logging activities in their traditional hunting grounds by a number of logging companies.

"Roads are being constructed and timber being removed without their consent, or even the knowledge of the majority of the Penan people and their representatives. Compensation for damages is non-existent or far from adequate, while token handouts to influential individuals are intended to quell the possibility of any dissent."

Malaysia is the world's largest rainforest timber exporter - primarily to Japan and China. But 80% of Australia's imported rainforest 'timber' comes from Malaysia, mainly Sarawak.

The Penan Declaration

"We, the Penan people of the Tutoh and Limbang Rivers region declare:

"Stop destroying the forest or we will be forced to protect it.

"The forest is our livelihood. We had lived here before any of you outsiders came. We fished in clean rivers and hunted in the jungle. We made our sago meal and ate fruit from the trees. Our life was not easy, but we lived it in content. Now the logging companies turn rivers into muddy streams and the jungle into devastation. The fish cannot survive in dirty rivers and wild animals will not live in devastated forest.

"You took advantage of our trusting nature and cheated us into unfair deals. By your doings, you take away our livelihood and threaten our very lives. You make our people discontent. We want our ancestral land, the land we live off, back. We can use it in a wiser way. When you come to us, come as guests, with respect...

"We the representatives of the Penan people, urge you: stop the destruction now. Stop all logging activities in the Tutoh and Limbang Rivers regions. Give back to us what is properly ours. Save our lives, have respect for our culture. If you decide not to heed our request, we will protect our livelihood. We are a peace-loving people, but when our very lives are in danger, we will fight back.

"This is our message."

Send any letters on this important issue to His Excellency Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Mahmud and His Excellency's Government of Malaysia, The Malaysian High Commissioner, 7 Perth Ave, Yarralumla ACT 2600
For further information contact the Rainforest Information Centre, PO Box 368, Lisrnore 2480